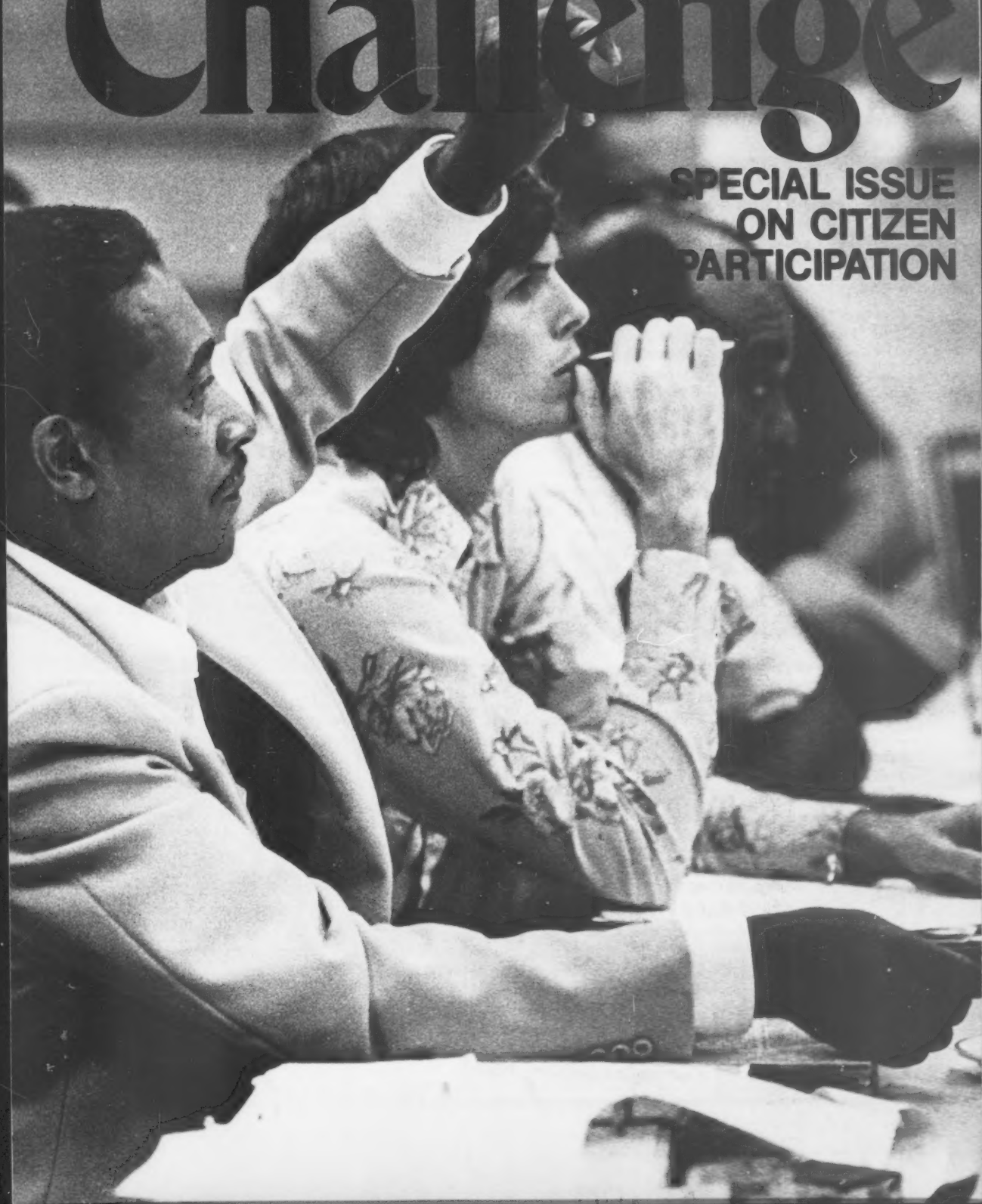


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# Challenge

**SPECIAL ISSUE  
ON CITIZEN  
PARTICIPATION**



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# HUD Challenge

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

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Statements made by authors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department.

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**PAGE 4:** What is HUD policy governing Citizen Participation? The full range of guidelines, Central Office and Field responsibility as well as the complaint procedure are summarized by Toni Thomas, Special Assistant for Citizen Participation.

**PAGE 11:** Absence of the business and financial interests of many communities from community planning and development efforts threatens the viability of projects across the country, according to Anthony Downs of the Real Estate Research Corporation. His "prescription" for success places special emphasis on these segments of the community.

**PAGE 14:** Atlanta's successful experience with Citizen Participation is highlighted in this issue along with those of several other cities. Despite its many successes, Atlanta is grappling with other problems relating to citizen involvement in community affairs.

## NEXT MONTH:

Higher education and urban affairs

COVER: by David Valdez, HUD photographer

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# looking ahead

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## Solar Warning Issued

A spokesman for the Office of Consumer Affairs, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, has issued a warning to consumers to investigate the claims of solar home heating manufacturers before purchasing any of their products. Most manufacturers of solar power products are honest and tend to understate the case for solar power; however, a few are making exaggerated claims that are attracting publicity. Both the press and consumers should check out claims with reliable engineers before investing in systems that use the sun's energy to provide heat for homes and water. In this way, filing complaints later on can be avoided or minimized.

## "American Banking" Bicentennial Exhibit

The American Bankers Association is featuring a Bicentennial exhibit at the Smithsonian Institute's Museum of History and Technology which depicts the role of banking in America's growth. Various segments of the exhibit, representing key periods of U.S. banking history, are linked by "time tunnels" branching out from a giant walk-through vault door. Designed to entertain the family as well as inform the serious scholar of banking and its history in America, the exhibit will be open to the public for at least 2 years.

## World Environment and Resources Council Conference

"Human Well-Being in Cities" is the theme of the upcoming Conference on the Environment of Human Settlements to be held March 1-4 in Brussels, Belgium. The conference, sponsored by the World Environment and Resources Council, will provide a forum for discussion among architects, city officials and planners, economists, engineers, lawyers, industrial designers for urban application, and scientists interested in the quality of life within urban areas. This conference is preliminary to the second Conference of European Environmental Ministers to be held in April and to the U.N. Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat '76) to be held in May/June and will serve as a means for developing a program for the Belgian participation in the latter conferences. The primary objective of the World Environment and Resources Council is to encourage environmentally concerned and appropriately qualified, nongovernmental national bodies (professional, scientific, societies, organizations of concerned citizens, etc.) to coordinate their activities at the national and international level.

## Ford Foundation to Aid Demonstration Projects

March 15, 1976, marks the deadline for submitting applications to the Ford Foundation for grants to support a limited number of local and regional open housing demonstration projects aimed at lowering the barriers of discrimination based on race, sex, or income. The foundation is contemplating a second round of grants for stabilizing existing interracial neighborhoods. Last year, grants for periods up to 2 years were made for five neighborhood stabilization projects. These included an experimental variable-payment mortgage program, a community education effort to preserve racial balance in neighborhood schools, a program of social services designed to reunite a community divided over a high-rise public housing project, development of a computerized listing service of homes for sale throughout a major market area, and a campaign to involve apartment dwellers together with homeowners in strengthening their neighborhood. Budgets ranged from \$9,000 to \$50,000. Applicants seeking grants for support of open housing and neighborhood stabilization projects should set forth: concise project objectives, a detailed program for pursuing objectives, a statement of their capability for undertaking the work, a precise budget, current sources of support, status of applications to other funding sources, and Internal Revenue Service classification. Applications in quadruplicate should be submitted to Robert W. Chandler, The Ford Foundation, 320 East 43rd Street, New York, New York 10017.

## Construction Case Argued via Picturephone

For the first time in the history of the American judicial system, a picturephone was used during court proceedings—and the case happened to involve a construction firm. A 15-year-old damage suit involving a New York City contractor in liquidation since 1967 was argued via picturephone between New York City and the U.S. Court of Claims in Washington, D.C.

## Households Using More Electricity

According to an article in the New York Times, quoting an industry source, the average U.S. household today uses about six times as much electricity as was used at the end of World War II—a national average of about 7,907 kilowatt hours a year per family today, as compared to 1,220 kilowatt hours in 1945. The substantial increase is due largely to greater use of appliances, such as dish and clothes washers, air conditioning and, in many cases, electric heating.

# Involving the Citizen in Public Affairs

by Secretary Hills

Citizen Participation in public affairs is nothing new in our country. Indeed, it is a basic characteristic of our political system.

The New England town hall tradition is deeply imbedded in the American ethos, but the channels for its expression became more and more constricted in the post-colonial period. With a burgeoning population and a shift from a rural and agricultural orientation to an urban and industrial one, the concept of direct citizen involvement in the processes of government was eroded. Citizen Participation had become a thin fabric. Most citizens participated only by casting ballots at election time—and perhaps by occasional letters to elected representatives.

Now that thin fabric is being reinforced.

We have returned to acceptance of—and added legislative sanction for—the idea that citizens should be involved in the processes through which decisions are reached by governing bodies.

We in HUD are particularly affected by the embodiment of this idea in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

In establishing a block grant mechanism for allocating Community Development funds, that Act gives local communities authority to set their own development priorities in accordance with locally perceived needs. It gives them resources to apply to those needs. And it gives them responsibility for carrying out programs and projects made possible



by those resources.

The surrender of Federal decision-making power and its return to local officials brought about conditions favorable to a resurgence of Citizen Participation. But the Act did more: it built in a **requirement** for citizen involvement.

To avail themselves of community development block grants, local com-

munities now must hold public hearings at which citizens can air their views on development and housing needs, and they must show that citizens have been given adequate opportunity to be involved actively in developing the community's application for funding.

Our first year of experience with the block grant program has revealed a broad range of forms and styles of Citizen Participation. This was expected. We did not want to **prescribe** a form or a style. The program serves a wide variety of communities—small towns, large cities, urban and rural counties. Their needs are various, and they have differing methods of operation. Instead of imposing a particular approach to Citizen Participation, we are relying on performance standards that must be met under **whatever** approach a community adopts.

As we monitor the first year's performance of grantee communities, we are looking both for factors that contributed to successful Citizen Participation programs and for practices that impede full Citizen Participation. We will suggest corrective action where needed and we will provide technical assistance where appropriate. Communities are learning through experience, and we can expect improved performance in the second funding year.

What has been demonstrated so far is that Citizen Participation can be workable and meaningful. The next step is to insure that this potential is realized in all Community Development programs.



# Citizen Participation

By David O. Meeker, Jr.

If I were asked to list those changes in government during the past decade which have contributed most to the improvement of our society, I would certainly place the Citizen Participation process near the top. Although that process is far from perfect in its present form, it marks a great departure from the old method of doing business, and a very desirable change indeed.

Perhaps the best way to fully appreciate the changes which have resulted is to look back for a moment at how things were before the Congress mandated that we would all work together, with respect to housing.

Time and again I have listened to and sympathized with government officials who were conscientiously seeking to serve the needs of their constituents, but found themselves hamstrung because they really didn't know what the people wanted. Their efforts to learn were often met with resistance, in the form of hostility, distrust and, worst of all, apathy. Likewise, I have conversed many times with citizens who felt that government didn't care; that they were outside the mainstream of society. Repeated attempts to call attention to their needs met with frustration, so they eventually gave up and remained silent, convinced that those who govern in Washington, the State House and City Hall were out to do them in.

The beginnings of the new era of cooperation in the late 1960's were difficult, at best. Public meetings



lasted long into the night where citizens attempted in short speeches to unburden themselves of years of frustration. Public officials, often not accustomed to hearing a dissenting point of view so directly expressed, sometimes became sensitive and offended. But out of it all came dialogue and, once the emotion had passed, constructive thought and new ideas. That dialogue has continued over the years with very positive results in many communities. And with time it will be strengthened and improved.

The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 far surpassed all previous legislation in requiring Citizen Participation, to the extent that not only were meetings to discuss housing and community development to be announced and a minimum of two hearings held, but communities qualifying for Community Development funding had to develop a plan for citizen involvement. Cities and towns used a variety

of approaches to implementing Citizen Participation programs. Though, in some instances, the short lead-time in the first year caught some cities and towns short as they worked toward meeting the requirements for Citizen Participation, I am certain that the cooperation and progress that will eventually result will more than offset any difficulties at the beginning.

Finally, I would like to say a word about those citizens who participate in the process. At the onset, Citizen Participation was generally taken to mean an expression of the needs of poor people. In many quarters it still has that connotation, based, I suppose, on the assumption that those of more affluence and influence can better make their needs and wishes known. I submit that the process is intended for all people—the youth, those in business and the professions, laborers, white collar workers and virtually every special and general interest group in our society.

In my frequent travels around the country I have heard over and over from business and professional men and women the same litany recited by low-income groups—nobody at City Hall listens. Nobody cares! My response to all of them is the same—get informed, get involved and make your presence and your interests known. That is truly what Citizen Participation is all about, a vehicle for two-way communications for use by all of the people.

*HUD Assistant Secretary for Community Planning & Development.*

# HUD Guidelines Governing Citizen Participation

By Toni Thomas



What is HUD's position on Citizen Participation? The question is easy to answer. The difficulty surfaces in efforts to satisfy every citizen. That being the case, it was decided to let the communities choose their own forms of Citizen Participation as long as they met Citizen Participation requirements. HUD is committed to the philosophy as well as to the statutory mandates of Citizen Participation.

The first year of the block grant program caused problems for some locally elected officials, local citizen groups and individuals, and HUD. Some of the problems were attribut-

able to the transition from categorical loan and grant programs to block grant programs, which combined all of these programs into one. Prior to block grants, communities applied directly to HUD for funding. Under the new program funds are made available to communities on a formula basis.

The results of the transition are still being evaluated by the Community Planning and Development Office of Evaluation. However, visits with officials in a number of cities and States and meetings with citizens of the same localities reveal concern

on the part of officials and residents alike with the adequacy of Citizen Participation in the first year. Though we know that there will never be a program that will satisfy everyone, we are determined to see that Citizen Participation is carried out in a manner that is consistent with the emphatically stated block grant regulations on Citizen Participation. These regulations require that citizens be given information on Community Development and housing programs, including the amount of funds available; that they be afforded an opportunity to articulate needs, express



Photos by David Valdez





preferences about program activities, assist in the selection of priorities and participate in the development of the application; that they be given information on other important program requirements touching on the environment, equal opportunity, relocation, and other areas of concern.

HUD Field Staff have been monitoring the programs of grantees to determine whether prescribed performance standards, including Citizen Participation requirements, have been met. Regional Citizen Participation Officers have also been monitoring some grantees on a select basis as well as providing training and technical assistance to grant recipients.

#### **Responsibility of Field Staff**

Field staff principally responsible for

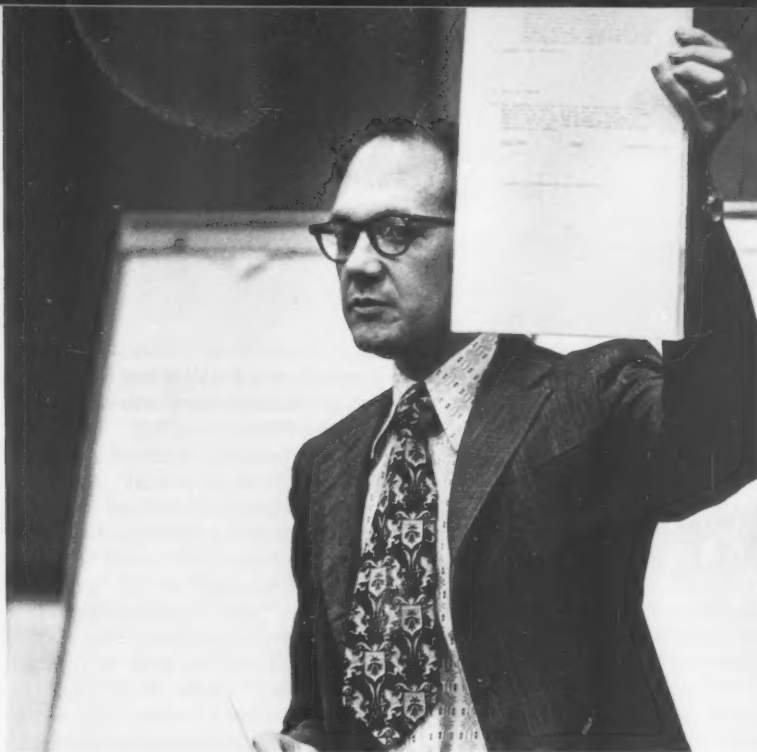
ensuring Citizen Participation in Community Planning and Development programs are the Regional Citizen Participation Officers. These persons provide direction and support to HUD field offices. Regional Citizen Participation Officers carry out their tasks through monitoring and evaluation of field office operations and administration of Community Development Block Grant and Comprehensive Planning Assistance (701) programs, categorical grant programs through final close-out and environmental and relocation processes. Additionally, Regional Citizen Participation Officers are responsible for clarifying and interpreting legislative and regulatory requirements, identifying training needs and resources, providing technical assistance to field

offices on critical situations, and making recommendations for needed changes in legislation, regulations, policies and procedures.

#### **Complaint Procedures**

A uniform complaint procedure for handling citizen complaints has been established primarily to assure that block grant applicants and recipients answer individual and other complaints in a timely and responsive manner. All complaints of a Citizen Participation nature received by HUD Headquarters staff or its field staff from individual citizens or citizen groups are referred to the city's mayor for direct response to the issues raised by the complainant. The mayor is asked to respond to each issue raised within fifteen (15) days





and to provide the Area Office with a copy of the city's response.

The "test of reasonableness" that assesses the adequacy of an applicant or recipient's response is applied by the Area Office. Appropriate follow-up action is required by the Area Office when a local official's response is determined to be: (1) inconsistent with known data about the city, its Community Development Block Grant application, or its Community Development planning and operational processes; (2) inappropriate to

the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 and its regulations and (3) unresponsive to any item of the complaint. Again, Regional Citizen Participation Officers monitor field office assessments and disposition of these matters and, where appropriate, advise them on the need for further action.

Grant recipients are required to maintain certain records on Citizen Participation, including (1) narrative or other records describing the process used to inform citizens of the amount of funds available for proposed Community Development and housing activities, the range of activities that may be undertaken and other important program requirements; (2) records of public hearings held to obtain the views of citizens on community development and housing needs; and (3) narrative or other records of the opportunities provided citizens to participate in the development of block grant applications.

During the first year the number of Citizen Participation complaints received in HUD Central Office and field offices were limited. We can make several assumptions. One, that citizens had nothing to complain

about; that they were not familiar enough with the program to feel comfortable registering a complaint; or, that their complaints were being handled satisfactorily at the local level. It is hoped that citizens and locally elected officials worked so cooperatively together that most complaints were resolved satisfactorily at the local level.

However, if for some reason, the number of complaints received were not indicative of adequate Citizen Participation but instead accounted for citizens' lack of knowledge or understanding of the Block Grant Program we feel comfortable in knowing that the new-found sophistication of locally elected officials, grantees and citizens alike will surface such inadequacies and corrective action taken.



*Ms. Thomas is Special Assistant for Citizen Participation to the Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development. She has broad experience in HUD programs, having served as a Program Analyst in the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity and in the Office of Housing Production and Mortgage Credit.*

# Why Citizen Participation?

By Ernest Erber

Citizen Participation in governmental decisionmaking is a historic tradition in our country. Carrying this concept to these shores, frontiersmen often petitioned with arms in hand, as in Bacon's rebellion before the Revolution and in Shay's after. The penchant of Americans for telling their government what they wanted and how it should be done, giving rise in its ultimate form to the New England practice of the town meeting, made a forceful impression upon Alexis de Tocqueville when he visited the United States in the early years of the Republic to interpret for Europeans how democracy worked as a mode of government. Accustomed to the inaccessibility of government to the average Frenchman and the latter's deference to those in authority, de Tocqueville was struck by the ease with which Americans called upon their neighbors to band together to exert pressure upon government to take a prescribed course of action.

Citizen Participation historically was mainly an *ad hoc* activity; the citizens who banded together for an objective either achieved it quite readily or gave up the effort because they were either discouraged or simply convinced that the goal was unattainable. As governmental processes matured, however, Citizen Participation became increasingly in-

stitutionalized, beginning with citizens organized to protect or advance their interests as professional, trade or occupational groups with paid lob-

byists to represent them at the seat of government, initially Federal and State. These early citizen groups based on economic interests were soon joined by those based on institutional reform; abolition of slavery, humanization of prisons, equality of opportunity for women, creation of public schools and protection of children against economic exploitation.

## Citizens Organized Around Causes

The revelation of widespread corruption in State and local government—epitomized by Lincoln Steffens' "The Shame of Our Cities"—triggered a citizen movement for governmental reform, giving rise to enduring citizen organizations such as the National Municipal League, and the National Civil Service League. In many cities citizen groups appeared under such names as Citizen Budget Committee, Tax Reform League, Municipal Research Bureau, etc., a form of Citizen Participation which still exists. During the Great Depression of the 1930's, millions of unemployed citizens joined together in local and, ultimately, national organizations of the unemployed to press for publicly-funded jobs and passage of legislation for unemployment insurance. (The author of these lines received his first training in Citizen Participation in the organizations of the unemployed in 1932-35.) During this same decade, America's elderly citizens organized

for institutional reform to provide security for the aged and soon gained their first objective with the enactment of Social Security.

The fostering of city and regional planning was initially a citizen activity. Citizens in Chicago organized to create and promote the privately funded Burnham Plan and to inform the public about it, especially through Wacker's famous *Manual*. In New York a similar citizen effort created "The Plan for New York and its Environs" in the 1920's, an effort that continues in the form of the Regional Plan Association, America's oldest Citizen Participation organization in the field of urban and regional planning. (These efforts gave rise to governmental planning in the uniquely American format of planning boards of citizens appointed by the mayor and quasi-independent of the governing body.) Citizen housing groups appeared at the end of the 19th Century in the wake of exposures of housing conditions by Jacob Riis and others. In the 1930's the National Housing Conference was formed to promote governmental assistance to housing.

Recent decades have seen the proliferation of citizen organizations to further additional interests or causes. The formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in the early 1900's to speak for black citizens was followed in succeeding decades by the formation of many other organizations to represent citizens of various racial and ethnic identities. When the women's suffrage movement enfranchised females, the League of Women Voters was born. The National Organization of Women was organized to carry on the fight for equality of the sexes on a broader front.

Both national and local citizen or-

ganizations were formed in the 1950's in response to the growing concern over urban deterioration. A group of citizens in Baltimore organized the Fight Blight Fund and received nationwide publicity. A similar effort in the Pittsburgh area, organized as the Allegheny Conference to Improve Our Neighborhoods (ACTION) gave birth to a national organization by the same name. (This author served as Executive Director of the Passaic Valley Citizens Planning Association from 1950 to 1960, an organization that carries on as the Planning Association of North Jersey.)

The citizen organizations referred to above had no charters from government nor public funds. They were initiated by the voluntary action of citizens and carried on independently of the powers of government. In the late 1950's, a new tradition in Citizen Participation was inaugurated when local citizen advisory committees for urban renewal were made mandatory by the Slum Clearance Division of the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency. When Congress passed the Model Cities Act in 1966 it further institutionalized mandatory Citizen Participation with the now well-known requirement for "the most feasible participation" of the poor in local community action programs (CAP's). This marked an innovation in Citizen Participation not only because of the highly structured election process for selecting the CAP's governing body but, more importantly, because the law confined participation to those citizens directly affected by the program. This requirement has important clues for Congressional intent with respect to Citizen Participation in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

#### Participation Bred Power

The rationale for the "most feasible participation" of the poor was that they needed power over decisions influencing their neighborhoods and, basically, their lives, to compensate for their lack of power in the community at large, and, specifically, their exclusion from political power in city hall. The implicit duality of power inherent in counter-balancing the CAP agency and city hall soon became explicit as a tug-of-war began. Mayors used their influence in Congress to amend the law to give city hall the option of subordinating the Model Cities project to its direction.

Model Cities and the CAP agencies proved to be a great training ground for thousands of poor people in public administration and politics, not to speak of public relations, communication organization, construction, social welfare, health services and manpower training. It proved beyond any need for further study that citizens learn primarily by "doing," and only secondarily by formal education. But above all, Model Cities proved that there is no type of voluntary action more likely to engage and *maintain* the involvement of citizens than that which directly and obviously affects their daily lives. A banker or physician might give time to voluntary citizen activities out of a deep commitment to community service, a form of *noblesse oblige*. The average citizen, however, who is beset with the daily pressures of economic survival must see a purpose related to his own interests in being a citizen participant. In this sense, participation by those affected by a governmental program is in the historic tradition of citizen action reviewed above. It has been proven that citizen involvement does not dissipate where it is a case

of "my occupation," "my profession," "my race," "my beliefs." Nor does it dissipate when it is a case of "my block" and "my neighborhood."

Since Congress wrote (not once but several times) into the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 that its purpose is to benefit those "principally of low- and moderate-income," and then specified that there should be "adequate opportunity for Citizen Participation," it would seem valid to conclude that Congress intended the Citizen Participation to be of, and for, those of low- and moderate-income who have the largest stake in the program.

There are also the interests of those who are committed to institutional reforms, for example, abolishing racial discrimination and segregation. As with the great citizen movement for the abolition of slavery, the fight for fair housing has been primarily a Citizen Participation effort. The National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing (NCDH), was founded in 1950 by representatives of a large number of national voluntary organizations with a commitment to civil rights in the fields of religion, labor, politics and ethnic affairs. Because local metropolitan fair housing organizations have a natural concern to influence decisions affecting community development and assisted housing to assure compliance with civil rights laws, they will seek opportunities to participate as citizens at either neighborhood or community levels. (See "Handbook for Fair Housing Advocacy under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974," NCDA, Washington, D.C. 1974.)

*Mr. Erber is Director of Research and Planning, National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing.*

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## in print

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*Certification for Community Development: A Manual of Procedures* has been published by the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) to assist cities and counties participating in the 3-year Community Development Block Grant Program in carrying out the Federal requirements for environmental certification. Authored by Suzanne M. Wellborn, Director of Program Coordination for the National Realty Committee, Inc., the 86-page book is a nontechnical, nonlegal guide for use by Community Development planners and program administrators to ensure compliance with the environmental regulations of HUD and the guidelines of the Council of Environmental Quality. The publication also assists community development planners and administrators in building environmental improvement and protection into their community development programs and in incorporating environmental concerns into the community's decisionmaking process.

*Metropolitan America in Contemporary Perspective.* Edited by Amos H. Hawley, University of North Carolina, and Vincent P. Rock, National Research Council. A Sage Publication. Distributed exclusively by Halsted Press. Chosen by the Library of Urban Affairs Book Club. October 1975. 450pp. \$25.00 In Canada: Order from John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 22 Worcester Road, Rexdale, Ontario, Canada. Price slightly higher in Canada.

*The Politics of Neglect: Urban Aid from Model Cities to Revenue Sharing* by Bernard J. Frieden and Marshall Kaplan, 1975. \$14.95. The MIT Press, 28 Carleton Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02142.

*Settlement Houses and the Great Depression*, by Judith Ann Trolander. Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1975. 216pp. \$14.45. Settlement houses, as indicated by Judith Trolander, have played a distinctive role in shaping America's reform programs. In the Progressive Era settlement houses were very vocal and backed many controversial issues of social reform, but during the New Deal Era, the days of Franklin Roosevelt, they changed course to a more passive role. During the Progressive Era, settlement houses operated independently and each solicited for its own fund direct from the public; therefore, no central agency could control their policies and programs. Because there was no hierarchy to negotiate with, they were more responsive to the needs of the poor community.

Settlement houses were innovative and initiated such programs as kindergarten, Americanization programs for immigrants, public playgrounds and the passage of housing regulations. During this era, settlement houses backed such controversial issues as recognition of labor unions, child work laws, more wages and better working condi-

tions for women. Settlements were powerful enough to control the politics of the ward boss and the mood of the neighborhoods.

In contrast, during the New Deal Era, the rise of social workers, and the emergence of the Community Chest brought about a change in the role of settlement houses. The New Deal was geared toward the economic problems of the Nation with the Federal Government as the focal point, rather than at neighborhood levels. The professionalism of social workers had its beginning, and many persons felt that this professionalism was the key to solving social problems and reforms. Casework done by settlement houses as a part of the aiding process was considered as a teaching technique by social workers. Consequently, the act of real involvement and caring was missing.

The Community Chest had become the controlling body for all charities, excluding the settlement houses in New York and Chicago. Settlement houses belonging to the Community Chest had to comply with the policies of the board which controlled their budget. The board could approve or disapprove any program of the settlement houses and pressure them into acceptance of its wishes. Therefore, settlement houses had to be careful not to offend the board by backing controversial issues such as race relations and labor reforms. This made their role more passive.

Chapter 8, "The Settlements and Housing," gives a brief history of the kinds of programs and laws the settlement houses were involved in; the entry of the Federal Government into the housing field through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) and the setbacks suffered during this period. Today, money for new construction and rehabilitation of settlements and community centers is made available through the Neighborhood Facilities Program which was inaugurated by the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965. Recently, HUD contributed \$700,000 for the renovation of Kingsley House in New Orleans which was founded in 1896. Settlement houses endorsed the concept of planning through community action. The Federal Government and private philanthropy organizations such as the Ford, Kaiser, and Taconic Foundations have also adapted this concept. Mobilization for Youth and the Ford Foundation's "Grey Area" Projects were connected with settlement houses and were the precursors to the Great Society Programs. Many of the Great Society programs alienated local authorities because they had no control or voice in how the money was spent.

—Ms. Ruby Gill  
Circulation Librarian, HUD



# A Prescription for Success in CP

By Anthony Downs

*Editor's Note: Mr. Downs is chairman of the board of Real Estate Research Corporation (REA), specialists in economics and public affairs counseling.*

Every city and urban county seeking funds under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 has created some type of "Citizen Participation" arrangements, as required by the Act. Most of these arrangements were adequate to assure HUD approval of first-year applications for funds, especially since HUD was lenient in the initial year of the new program. A survey conducted by Real Estate Research Corporation indicates, however, that many such arrangements are likely to prove ineffective in the long run at accomplishing certain key goals of the Community Development (CD) program.

Specifically, the Citizen Participation arrangements most cities and counties have created up to now will be inadequate means of:

1. Attracting large amounts of private capital and other non-Federal resources to supplement Federal funds allocated to community development.
2. Educating citizen participants, local officials, and the community as a whole concerning their potential for development and the nature of their problems so as to create an effective political consensus behind any programs finally adopted.
3. Establishing effective Citizen Participation at both neighborhood and citywide levels. Unless these goals are achieved, Community Development programs will not accomplish their objectives.

## **Attracting Private Financial Resources into Community Development**

Available Federal funds must be used mainly as leverage to attract much larger amounts of private capital into the Community Development process. Otherwise that process will not even provide much window-dressing for city neighborhoods.

Private financial capital is not likely to be made available for community development efforts, however,

unless leaders of the institutions controlling it become active participants in the Community Development process. They include key officials in savings and loan associations, insurance companies, local banks, mortgage firms, real estate brokerage firms, and development organizations. Across the Nation, leaders of such institutions are beginning to recognize more fully that they have an important financial stake in maintaining the quality of existing urban neighborhoods. But that recognition is by no means automatically translated into their making significant investments in such neighborhoods. In fact, they are unlikely to do so unless they are given key roles in making decisions about the entire Community Development process.

Unfortunately, most cities REA surveyed and worked with in their Community Development planning efforts have failed to understand this central financial role of Citizen Participation in the Community Development process. Their municipal leaders were still thinking of Citizen Participation mainly as a means of giving neighborhood residents a voice in the preparation of plans and programs affecting their own areas. That was its basic purpose in such past programs as urban renewal, the anti-poverty program, and Model Cities. Certainly this is a desirable and necessary aspect of Citizen Participation in the Community Development program too. But there will not be much improvement for local residents to influence if Citizen Participation is interpreted only in this narrow manner. It must be structured to provide persons and institutions who control private financial capital—especially real estate-oriented capital—with a meaningful voice in the Community Development process too.

How can this be done? We offer the following suggestions:

- Representatives of key private financial interests should be asked to function primarily at the citywide level, rather than at the individual neighborhood level. This is desirable for two reasons. First, local financial industry leaders want to influence the **overall role** they will be asked to play in the entire community. That

determines the total amount of resources they will invest. In fact, this situation provides local government officials with an excellent argument for persuading financial leaders to participate actively in Community Development. Local officials can point out that playing an overall role is the only way financial institutions can avoid being "whip-sawed" by separate neighborhoods. If that occurs, those institutions might be under pressure to make an excessively risky number of local investments in older areas. A second reason for officials in financial firms to serve on one citywide committee is that they cannot devote enough time to participate actively in many different neighborhood groups.

● This means there ought to be one overall citizens' advisory group for the whole city, consisting of representatives of both different geographic areas and private financial institutions. Most cities have one such committee, but its members are usually chosen solely as representatives of different geographic areas or neighborhoods. In St. Louis, for example, the mayor appointed two persons from each of 18 districts in the existing Citizens' Communication System, plus one added representative from each urban renewal project area. In cases like this, another set of members from the real estate and financial communities could be added to the overall committee. Or a separate committee of such persons could be created to act either in concert with the first group, or in an advisory capacity to it. In cities that now have many different neighborhood advisory committees, rather than one overall committee, a single overall coordinating committee should be created with members of the financial community represented on it.

● Local "trade associations" in the real estate and financial communities might be asked to appoint official representatives to perform the functions described above. These could include the local chapters of the American Banking Association, the U.S. League of Savings Associations, the Mortgage Bankers Association, the National Association of Home Builders, the National Association of Realtors, and the Building Trades Council. Such officially-appointed representatives can better speak for each local industry than persons appointed solely as individuals, even if they are also local leaders in that industry.

● Specific programs or devices designed to use private real estate capital should be considered as part of the



**local Community Development plan.** An example is a revolving housing rehabilitation loan fund with the basic capital supplied by private lenders but with guarantees or insurance funded with Federal money. Many localities are unfamiliar with such devices; hence, instruction concerning them should be part of the educational process.

Whatever approach is used, it is vitally important for local governments to recognize the need for including local real estate and financial leaders in their Citizen Participation structures. In nearly all communities, this will require modification or expansion of those structures as they exist now.

#### **Informing Citizen Participants**

Community Development in modern American cities is a fantastically complex process for three reasons. First, urban areas involve immensely complicated interrelationships among different areas of activity—such as the housing, health care, transportation, education, criminal justice, and social welfare systems. Second, local residents and the operators of these systems are already engaged in many-faceted political relationships with each other. Any attempts to change neighborhood structures involve changing these political relationships and, therefore, normally require negotiations with many different groups. Third, the financial resources available for Community Development are limited. Therefore, difficult resource allocation choices must be made in designing each Community Development program.

Under these circumstances, it is naive and unrealistic to believe that any group of citizens in a community, no matter how brilliant its members, can suddenly come together and start making effective decisions concerning Community Development without some preliminary period of learning more about their community. Yet, in my opinion, there was not enough time in the initial CD application process to carry out any significant education of citizen participants. Therefore, ongoing education of citizen participants after the initial application has been filed is very important.

This process should be designed to:

- **Better acquaint citizen participants with their community, key ongoing trends, and types of actions they can take to improve it.** It is amazing how little people know about their own neighborhoods or localities.

In one city we surveyed, for example, most local lenders thought the vast majority of residents were homeowners; less than half were. Few citizens know what types of government programs and aids are available to improve their areas.

- **Form a strong enough political consensus behind one recommended program so that it can actually be carried out.** Planners are always being criticized for creating plans and documents that just gather dust on shelves. But no plans can be carried out unless they have sufficient political consensus behind them to get adopted and achieve sustained support. It is not easy to develop such a consensus among both city government officials and the many diverse members of a truly representative Citizen Participation committee. This is especially hard if the committee contains members from both different geographic areas and the financial community. One way to help create agreement among all these actors is to provide them with a common factual background and policy-alternatives analysis. Thus, a key purpose of the educational process for citizen participants—and local government officials—is to start them toward political consensus by exposing them to the common experience of learning the same facts about their community, and about the possibilities of improving it. If such a consensus emerges, “civilian” participants and city officials will reinforce each other’s positions in the general community consideration of what policies should be adopted.

- **Develop a practical understanding of how to cope with the Federal bureaucracy, and how to engage in truly comprehensive Community Development planning.** Many smaller cities and many urban counties eligible for Community Development funds have never gone through the process of applying for HUD grants. Nor have they prepared any “comprehensive plans” involving the cooperation of many different departments of government. Both participating citizens and local government officials need outside help to explain procedures to be followed.

The Community Development program is really a local self-help program—not just another form of Federal aid. Unless the local “helpers” who get involved in it are given a truly significant role in making key decisions; include people controlling significant private financial resources, as well as local residents; and join together in a common educational experience, many local programs will not accomplish their goals. ☞

# Tangible and Intangible Results of CP in Atlanta

by Myra B. Peabody

"I was home one day and heard a voice over a loudspeaker outside announcing a meeting. I went to the meeting and, to tell the truth, I dozed off every once in a while as various ones talked.

"Somehow I heard a request for volunteers and raised my hand. As I look back on this beginning, I feel it was the start of something unheard of in Atlanta before. And I know it was the cause of unparalleled changes in our city."

What Mattie Jackson, a totally involved resident of Atlanta's Summerhill community, was referring to was the beginning of meaningful, effective Citizen Participation in that city in 1964. According to her story what has happened through Atlanta's Community Action Program Agency (Economic Opportunity Atlanta), the Model Cities Program and through other opportunities for citizen input, has caused a complete turnabout in the attitudes of government toward people and people toward government.

"Citizens are better informed now," she said. "They realize government is spending their tax dollars,

and they're asking to see the budgets. Government now realizes it needs citizens to review programs. It needs citizens on boards, councils and committees. It needs people from low, middle and upper income brackets working together for the good of the city."

Mattie Jackson tells the story of citizen involvement in Atlanta's government. It starts with the first meeting she attended and covers her election to the Model Cities Executive Board for 5 consecutive years, her membership on the National Citizen Participation Board of Directors, the Region IV (Southeastern U.S.) Citizens Council Board of Directors, and

most recently, her mayoral appointment to the city's prestigious and influential Future Funding Commission.

The evolution of this Citizen Participation process has brought about many results in Atlanta—some tangible and some intangible, but all real and all critical to improving the quality of life for all Atlanta's residents.

The new attitude of the current city administration toward citizen input is at least, in part, a result of lessons learned during the emergence of Citizen Participation in Atlanta during the last decade.

As the emphasis shifted from Federal programming to local deci-





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the company's expansion program caused the demise of an existing but obsolete recreation building.

A coalition of neighborhood groups and the city government worked closely and successfully to defeat a proposed highway that would have destroyed several of the city's most viable in-town neighborhoods. This coalition is again working with State and Federal transportation agencies to create a city park and museum on the land cleared for the highway.

### Intangible Results


There also are endless intangible results of Citizen Participation in Atlanta.

Some citizens from low-income areas who were scorned and labeled "activists" 10 years ago are now hailed as "concerned citizens." Many of them sit on major boards and commissions at all levels of government and even in quasi-government and private organizations.

Throughout Atlanta one finds people from different parts of the city working together. People from different income brackets share their various expertise with each other in open channels of communication.

Although the issue of Citizen Participation is not a debatable one in Atlanta, there are problems that still must be solved.

City administrators are trying to find ways to involve more people in all levels of planning. They are questioning the efficacy of public hearings as the best way for citizens to be heard. They are studying new ways to provide technical assistance and are putting a new emphasis on meaningful contribution.

As Mayor Jackson says, "We are looking for a **more** open, **more** responsible, **more** creative government recommitted to solving people's problems with the help of **all** the people **every** step of the way." 

*Mr. Peabody is Director of Community Affairs in Atlanta's Department of Community and Human Development.*

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1. & 2. Mattie Jackson, influential resident of Atlanta's Summerhill community, speaks out during meeting involving Mayor Jackson (top, right) and other community leaders. 3. Mayor Jackson (center) kicks off citizen planning hearings on Atlanta's Community Development Program.

made suggestions and passed along ideas now being implemented.

Atlanta has recently completed development of a highly structured, meaningful mechanism for citywide Citizen Participation in all city efforts called Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU). There are 24 NPU's composed of 180 neighborhoods. NPU elected representatives submit neighborhood recommendations to the city and represent the citizens in negotiations with the city government.

Driving through the city, one sees innumerable monuments to effective Citizen Participation. The Model Cities Education Complex, 30 acres of land with over \$60 million worth of facilities, is a direct result of intense citizen pressure and consistent citizen involvement. The residents knew what they needed and worked for it.

In another section of the city, Southern Railroad built a magnificent \$2 million recreation facility for the neighborhood. The company realized its position as an industrial body in a residential neighborhood and its responsibility not to ignore the needs and wishes of its neighbors when

sionmaking through the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, city administrators in Atlanta felt the need for intensified Citizen Participation. They affirmed a commitment to involvement well beyond simple fulfillment of the HUD regulations.

### Tangible Results

Community development program planning has been completed for the first year through the leadership of Commissioner Davey L. Gibson and Department of Community and Human Development staff. Throughout the process citizens and neighborhood organizations proposed projects,

# The Yin and Yang of Citizen Participation

By Tom Gale

There is no such thing as an ideal citizen participation program. Over a period of time no program will remain static in any locality. Citizen Participation may help to stabilize relations between "decisioners" and "decisionees," but it cannot "freeze" them. The activities that lead from conflict to cooperation in one year are the same practices that will trigger dissent and lead to contention in a following year.

The Greeks of Heraclitus' time understood that they *stepped* and *did not step* in the same stream of water. We must learn that we *sit* and *do not sit* in the same public hearings.

In other words, we must deal with the conflicts inherent in Citizen Participation. We must learn to steer in two directions at once in decision-making. There are navigational aids in the Rules and Regulations for the Community Development Block Grant Program, and there are a few other landmarks along the way.

As coincidental as the Cliffs of Dover, but similarly convenient for reference, is the "Two Rule" for public hearings in the Community Development Block Grant application process. The Two Rules states that there will be at least two public hearings. It comes about, as nearly as I can determine, because the plural is used in the Act, because we are used to hearing of *hearings*. Nothing of interest is disposed of in one sitting.

There is a logic in two hearings, however, if we conscientiously seek to make them something more than two opportunities for bloody fights or two boring sessions. I believe the Two Rule should be applied to create a Citizen Participation action on statements of need apart from all other actions. I don't find any other logic to the Two Rule. I do find a great benefit in all parties, citizen or official, being required to complete a process for establishing community development needs before pursuing any matters necessarily more susceptible to narrow interests.

In the absence of any grant of decisionmaking powers to non-officials, I can only find the legalistic purpose of the Citizen Participation provisions of the Act to be to place the elements of decisionmaking on public view. To ensure that needs are addressed in the decisions, even in a legalistic sense, it would seem that they must be publicly resolved before matters of goals, strategy and resource allocation can be taken up.

Apart from legal requirements, the purpose of an earnest citizen participation program must be to *establish the grounds of agreement in the community*. A distinct Citizen Participation process in establishing community development needs is the most direct and least confusing means available for creating consensus in a community. Sub-area meetings have their advantages, but they should not substitute for the decisionmaking

process in a good Citizen Participation program.

In Citizen Participation an important consideration is the distinction between neighborhood concerns and matters of areawide interest. Although, in the *yin* and *yang*—opposite extremes—of community development and Citizen Participation, the distinctions can become *phantasmagorical* if essential characteristics of wide area and sub-area planning are not identified and held in focus. The identity problems are particularly severe in the case of lower-income Citizen Participation.

Poor neighborhoods are only relatively poor. Many undeniably poor neighborhoods in the United States would be considered rich in many parts of the world. It is the relationship of one neighborhood to others, to an urban system, that makes it poor or rich or middle-income. In an objective view, an urban system seems to serve its higher-income rather than lower-income neighborhoods. Assistance to lower-income neighborhoods is a placebo unless it is delivered so as to alter the relationship of the neighborhood to the system that consigns it to relative poverty. Citizen Participation that is limited to allocating imported resources is diversionary. A citizen participation program should be conducted so as to provide a lower-income voice in decisions affecting metropolitan area development. It is not enough to plan a

highway and sewer system to encourage development of undeveloped land. A market demand and development capital must also be mobilized. It is not enough to plan metropolitan



development to accommodate lower-income neighborhood development. A positive reaction must be assured on the part of the neighborhood and on other components of development, principally capital finance sources. Just as a lower-income voice for metropolitan planning should be a goal of a program for Citizen Participation in community development, so should a voice for metropolitan interests be provided in neighborhood planning.

It is unreal to expect the centers of power in metropolitan areas to open their councils unilaterally to the powerless. It is also unreal to expect lower-income neighborhoods to invite outsiders in to participate in allocating those neighborhoods' resources.

Unless these problems are addressed squarely, Citizen Participation in community development is a rhetorical exercise and the Community Development Block Grant Program has little chance to be effective.

The only answer to this dilemma that I can recognize is the creation of a planning effort with goals that relate metropolitan development to lower-income neighborhood development and in which decisions are shared by lower-income neighborhood representatives and representatives of metropolitan development efforts. The effort must command its own planning resources. I do not believe decisions can actually be shared by the powerful and the powerless on any committee or advisory board unless the technical work of the panel is conducted by persons responsible directly to each of its members.

A local government should provide for a funded citizens' planning effort under the control of appropriate citizen representatives. It should not differentiate needs from other concerns in the conduct of a citizen participation program adjunct to its Community Development Block Grant Program. A government that does otherwise will miss its greatest available opportunities to solve problems of blight and decay. Such a locality is likely to continue to be trapped between the *yin* of charity and the *yang* of contention. ☯

*Mr. Gale is Housing Director of the National Urban League, Inc.*

# Since CP Came to Newark

by Clarence Coggins

Since 1970 Newark's experience with Citizen Participation has ranged from the elected 52-member Model Cities Advisory Council, to the present 27-member appointed Citizens Advisory Board to the Mayor's Policy and Development Office (MPDO). In addition, there has been an informal, loosely structured confederation of block clubs, tenant organizations and other community groups, that receive and feed back information on proposed and already implemented activities. There is also a staff unit, the Community Organization Division of MPDO, which is specifically charged with the responsibility of maintaining active participation among the citizenry.

In 1972, with the advent of Planned Variations, it became necessary for Newark to have an official citywide Citizens Participation structure. Considerable thought was given to the structure of the citizens board, and the method of selection. Elections within the respective sections seemed at first to be the most democratic. However in practice this procedure tended to keep out the poor and the young, and favor those with the resources to conduct successful campaigns. In addition, it did not guarantee representation from various agencies whose participation would be valuable to the program. Elections throughout the city every year would be expensive and time consuming, and would interrupt the continuity of the program. Thus the present 27-member Citizens Advisory Board, with one person recommended by



Author, Clarence Coggins (center), accepts award for successful voter registration drive from Mayor Kenneth Gibson (left) and Collins Green, President, Newark Block Club and Tenant Council.

each of the nine city council members, and the remaining 18 selected by the mayor, was instituted. On May 1, 1974, the Municipal Council of Newark passed an ordinance creating the Newark Citizens Advisory Board.

## Block Clubs

While the 27-member board has the responsibility of insuring the integrity of the Citizen Participation process, the scope of citizen involvement in Newark is far greater than that. There are over 300 block clubs throughout the city, which are affiliated with a central organization known as the Newark Block Club and Tenant Council. Presidents of block clubs have monthly meetings, to which various city officials and program directors are invited to discuss their respective agencies. This has often

been the means of changing a failing program to a successful one. For example, several summers ago the Department of Recreation instituted a Play Street Program. The department planned to have 50 streets in the city blocked off from traffic, where summer activities for children would be conducted by volunteers living on the block, with the assistance of summer recreation workers and enrollees in the Summer Youth Program. The officials of the department were disappointed because very few blocks applied for participation in the program. Through the Community Organization Division, arrangements were made for the Play Street Coordinator to attend a block club presidents' meeting and explain the program. In a very short time, the department received more Play Street applications than it needed, and has



been successfully operating every summer since then. Block clubs have also been the basis for the success of the SUNUP (summer nutrition) Program, which provided daily lunches for over 60,000 children in supervised groups last summer. Public safety programs, such as Block Watchers and Operation Identification, are among those publicized through the Newark Block Club and Tenant Council and its affiliated clubs, with the help of Community Organization staff, who are in constant touch with the community groups. These are activities through which residents not only receive services, but actively participate along with staff in rendering the services. This kind of effort is the key to survival of large cities such as Newark, where the tax base has dwindled, unemployment is high and the needs of the citizens remain as great or become greater.

Block clubs also embark on many self-help projects of their own. Some have regular street cleanups, vacant lot cleanups, block parties, bus trips, and other activities.


#### **Land Use Program**

One of the most unique of the self-help projects has been the interim land use program. In Newark there are hundreds of vacant lots, the result of large scale demolition over the years, as well as abandonment and small scale demolition at sites scattered throughout the city. They are now city property because taxes went unpaid. Although all of these lots have been cleaned several times by

city crews, they become eyesores again in no time at all, as long as there is no group of people in the neighborhood who feel that the lot is theirs and have a sense of pride in it. Under the program proposed by Community Organization, vacant city-owned lots were leased to the Newark Block Club and Tenant Council for \$1 a year, to be assigned to block clubs who would take the responsibility of turning them into gardens or play lots and maintaining and protecting them. This was started on a pilot basis last summer, with gratifying results. Summer youth workers and special crews hired through the CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) program, turned over the ground and helped residents prepare it for planting. Many neighbors who were originally skeptical were won over when they saw radishes, tomatoes, squash, turnips and other vegetables harvested from the community garden and distributed through the block. Used fencing material was obtained and erected around some of the lots, and to the surprise of many, none of the gardens was vandalized. The first self-help playground is now under construction, using many contributed pieces of equipment, such as used tractor tires, telephone poles, and spindles to make play structures. The block club is raising money to purchase asphalt for a basketball court. The city has good reason to hope that this "home made" playground will be better kept than the "mini parks" constructed a

few years ago at a cost of about \$30,000 each, which have already fallen into disrepair for lack of maintenance.

Newark is now in the implementation stage of its first year Community Development Block Grant Program, and is also beginning preparation for the second year submission. The Citizens Advisory Board is an integral part of these activities.

At the present time, individual Citizen Participation mechanisms are being established for the various projects being implemented with the city's \$20 million in Community Development funds. Community meetings are being scheduled to get community reaction to the proposed programs. The city of Newark has come a long way toward closing the credibility gap between the city's government and its citizens. The experience gained by the Newark MPDO in Citizen Participation since 1970, and the innovations in this area introduced under the leadership of Mayor Kenneth A. Gibson and MPDO Executive Director, David Dennison, have made Newark one of the country's leading cities in the area of Citizen Participation and community organization. In this field, as in others, Newark is fulfilling Mayor Gibson's prophecy—"Wherever the cities of America are going, Newark will get there first." 

*Mr. Coggins is Director of the Community Organization, Division of the Mayor's Policy and Development Office.*

# Community Development Should ...

By Don Hines

"I think Community Development should..."

The City of Tacoma asked its citizens to complete this statement during planning for the Community Development Block Grant Program. The result has been a first year program with active citizen involvement.

Tacoma has used citizens' committees successfully in the past for a variety of tasks ranging from identifying historic landmarks to developing shoreline management plans to reviewing the annual budget. Mayor Gordon N. Johnston and the city council decided to use the same method to develop a Community Development plan; so they selected a 20-member citizens' committee and

charged them with developing the plan.

Careful selection of committee members by the mayor insured representation of all geographic areas and interest groups. Five members were selected by the Model Cities citizens' committee and three citizens were selected at-large. The rest of the committee members represented the interests of the real estate industry, financial organizations, the construction industry, labor, housing, design professions, environmental interests, historic preservation, fine arts, the legal profession, the Port of Tacoma, and the Tacoma Urban League.

Through an extensive campaign of media announcements and direct mail

contacts, the committee, assisted by the Community Development Department staff under Director Gary Sullivan, asked the community how Community Development could best serve Tacoma.

Using the same concept American Oil and Refining Co., (ARCO) has used to seek citizens' ideas on public transportation, the citizens' committee began to hear what Tacomans thought Community Development should do. A clip-out form in the newspaper provided well written and considered responses even though the number of responses was not overwhelming.

The response to two public hearings held by the committee was over-



Tacoma Community Development Department Director Gary Sullivan (center rear) brings together citizens from the South East Athletic Association and staff from the Metropolitan Park District to work out details for a baseball field proposed by the citizens groups.



A citizens committee appointed by Tacoma's mayor and city council listened intently as Tacomans talked about the needs of the city and possible programs to meet those needs.

whelming. About 100 citizens were present at the hearings, with a sizeable number expressing their thoughts to the citizens' committee. Suggestions included access to public places for the handicapped to construction of a hobbyland.

The committee carefully, and at times agonizingly, considered each proposal no matter how large or small. Night after night the committee went through proposals, city plans and policies, data on needs, and Community Development rules and regulations, putting together Tacoma's plan. A number of divergent groups worked together to develop a plan representing the needs of the whole city and all its citizens.

The final first year program resulted in 16 of 31 projects originated by citizens' groups, 14 recommended by city departments and related agencies, and one program suggested by citizens and the city. After discussions with the committee, the city council approved the recommendations of the citizens and sent the plan to HUD.

The involvement of citizens did not end with the submission of the application. Since the plan was approved, the Tacoma Community Development Department has been going back to citizens' groups sponsoring various proposals to determine the details of each project, insuring the final project is what the group

intended in its original proposal. A number of meetings have been held to bring citizens' groups and agencies such as the Metropolitan Park District together to work out difficulties and to insure cooperation of all parties interested in the development of each project.

The approach of Tacoma's Community Development program has been to translate citizens' responses to "I think Community Development should..." into homes, buildings, parks, and an improved economic base, making Tacoma a better place to live.

*Mr. Hines is with the Community Development Department, City of Tacoma.*

# The National Citizen Participation Council

by Carl Johnson

The 1960's saw a growing new dimension on the part of citizens to renew their role as active participants in the decisionmaking process. The National Citizen Participation Council (NCPC), founded in May 1972, was charged with developing a Washington-based advocacy for citizen involvement in the development of Federal policy for urban community programming. Formed from regional Citizen Participation councils, the NCPC was a two-tiered, nationwide, "grass-roots" network of Model Cities citizen councils and, as such, constituted a unique vehicle by which inner-city residents could study and influence national social policy. From its inception, the NCPC has fought to insure the continued presence of Citizen Participation as an ongoing or institutionalized component of the Federal response to urban blight and decay. It is designed to provide information, training, and technical assistance independent of government agencies, and is responsible to the needs of participating citizens' groups.

NCPC was established to:

- Enhance the ability of citizens to respond knowledgeably and effectively to Revenue Sharing, Community Development and other Federal, State and local programs.
- Act as the advocate for Citizen Participation in Federal programs at the national level.
- Act as a clearinghouse on information for conducting studies; establish a library; maintain an updated forum; and plan and convene conferences and workshops pertinent to the overall and specific objectives of the program.
- Provide the structure and mechanism to ensure continued, enlightened Citizen Participation in Federal, State

and local programs.

- Provide vital training and technical assistance to regional and local Citizen Participation organizations in their efforts toward meaningful and effective participation in program planning and implementation affecting their communities.

During its brief history, NCPC has acted as a prime source for broadening the concept of Citizen Participation. Beginning with the original Model Cities Program, serving more than 140 communities, the NCPC, through its regional network, has grown to serve many of the more than 1300 entitlement communities authorized in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. These new jurisdictions are citywide in scope and have in many cases profited from the many invaluable Model Cities experiences as an approach to citywide concerns.

Over the past years, the National Citizen Participation Council has served as a citizens' pipeline from Washington, channeling information on new and existing Federal programs and their guidelines and the implications of the President's budget back to the regional councils. A network of regional and national council contacts, including officials from the national and regional offices of Federal agencies, the National League of Cities, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Center for Community Action, Joint Center for Political Studies, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), the Stanford University Community Development Center, the Rand Corporation, the National Council on Aging, and the Center for Community Change, among others, ensures that the National Council's information is the most timely and accurate available.

The National Council has also prepared issue papers on Citizen Participation in Community Development and housing programs and a draft policy statement for consolidating Citizen Participation requirements for existing categorical Community





(left to right) Chris Stirou, Minority Leader, New Hampshire House of Representatives, and author, Carl Johnson, NCPC Executive Director, assist at HUD training session on Citizen Participation.

Development programs.

The work of the National Council has become increasingly more difficult with the advent of block grants for Community Development for several reasons:

1. The number of cities to be served has increased greatly and the newer jurisdictions have little or no experience with either Community Development programming or Citizen Participation in policymaking.

2. Citywide programming has brought new political realities for established Citizen Participation councils at the local level.

3. Federal requirements for Citizen Participation were reduced from Model Cities standards resulting in grave threats to the continued existence of viable citizen involvement in policymaking for Community Development.

NCPC recognizes that meaningful Citizen Participation in urban program policy decisionmaking will, to a large degree, depend on the quality and quantity of support this and other organizations can deliver to leaders of citizen groups during a time when widespread citizen involvement in policymaking at the local community level is in question.

Through their involvement in activities like those on the Federal level, national and regional council staffs are well acquainted with issues that have traditionally perplexed citizen groups nationwide.

In many instances, in their efforts to resolve conflicts and develop vehicles for collaborative planning, citizen councils have gained the confidence of citizen groups and public officials throughout the country.

Citizen Participation has been a part of community life since the beginning of recorded history. It has played a vital role in the development of democracy in America. If it is to continue as an effective tool, it needs leadership and supportive organizational structure to direct energies in their most constructive channels. ©

*Mr. Johnson is Executive Director of NCPC.*



# Citizen Involvement in Comprehensive Planning

by Claudia Pharis

The 701 Comprehensive Planning and Management Program, the Federal Government's principal funding source for State, areawide and local comprehensive planning activities, has explicit requirements for citizen involvement.

Recipients of these funds are required to develop a procedure for ongoing comprehensive planning that permits citizen involvement where major plans, policies, priorities, or objectives are being determined. Planning pursued with 701 funds have direct and far reaching impact on everyone. It includes land use planning, which determines where growth will occur; the kind of growth; its intensity and timing. It also covers planning for housing, which projects goals, policies, and strategies to meet the housing needs of all citizens, including housing preservation, rehabilitation, and provision of adequate services. Broad based involvement of citizens in shaping public policy in these and other areas of comprehensive planning helps to insure that plans and policies are developed with an awareness of the interests of citizens and/or organizations representing them.

## **Regulations on Citizen Involvement**

Regulations governing implementation

of the 701 housing and land use elements set different requirements for different levels of government. Differences in the issues, functions and scales of operation relevant to States, local governments and areawide agencies are recognized, as are potential overlaps in these areas. The requirements are designed to insure that the land use and housing planning activities performed at different levels are coordinated when necessary, and are mutually compatible.

The greatest amount of experience with citizen involvement, and consequently the most refined citizen involvement processes, exist, in most cases, at the municipal level. Municipal citizen involvement processes are often neighborhood based, supplemented by a citywide component which includes public hearings or broad based advisory committees.

Areawide organizations tend to have governmentally based citizen involvement processes reflecting the internal structure of the organizations themselves. The most commonly employed structure is the advisory committee consisting of representatives from each member government. Areawide organizations also make use of newsletters and functionally aligned task forces.

A few State governments have

utilized television, surveys, and public hearings to ascertain public views. The size and dispersion of population in large scale jurisdictions make it difficult to establish close or immediate communication with a broad array of citizens. The time and personnel costs of intensive communication become major constraints in developing a citizen involvement program at this level of government. States have had some success with citizen involvement using locally based processes supported by a statewide advisory group and a technical task force. Cooperation with the citizen involvement processes of lower jurisdictions might also be a fruitful avenue for States to pursue.

## **Facilitating Citizen Involvement**

Because of the wide variety of circumstances which can exist requiring citizen involvement, no attempt is made to prescribe to State and local governments what mode they must choose. Instead, performance standards are designed to insure citizen involvement, while State and local conditions are relied upon to shape the specific mechanism.

Citizens who wish to become involved in comprehensive planning often do so by assisting recipient governments in determining what

form of citizen involvement is best for their State, region, or community. Governments often need assistance in identifying and establishing lines of communication with citizen organizations, and in devising ways of reaching the individual, unaffiliated citizen.

The goal of the statutory requirement is to make comprehensive planning an integral part of decision-making. As such, the less fragmented the process, the more effective it will be. Rather than establishing new citizen involvement mechanisms relating to comprehensive planning, therefore, citizens might consider encouraging recipient governments to consolidate already existing citizen organizations established in response to other requirements.

#### **Examples of Citizen Involvement Processes Now in Operation:**

**Washington State:** The State of Washington has a highly structured process in which citizens express their preferences on broadly defined issues through mass mailings, surveys, television and radio coverage, areawide conferences, and seminars.

**Oregon State:** Strong citizen involvement requirements were built into the State of Oregon's land use law. The State's Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) was charged with developing land use goals and guidelines for the State, and citizens were involved in every stage of the decisionmaking process, including identification of areas of critical concern, development


of options for managing land resources, and final articulation of goals and guidelines. Public meetings were held throughout the State, one for each stage of the decisionmaking process.

**New York City:** Citizen involvement in New York City is part of a systematic effort by the city to decentralize the city planning process. Each borough is divided into planning districts. These planning districts are mandated by city charter. There are 66 of them citywide. They are linked to the Planning Commission through the borough presidents who create the districts and appoint Community Boards, which are funded at \$10,000 each for expenses. There are mechanisms for inter-board communication, and for preserving a citywide perspective. The boards are the city's only citizen participation mechanism.

**San Francisco:** In 1971, the Planning Department of the City of San Francisco made a number of recommendations aimed at improving mechanisms and vehicles for citizen involvement in the planning process. The occasion was the revision of the master plan which the department felt provided an excellent opportunity to involve citizens in the review of the citywide plans which would guide zoning, capital improvements, community facilities, and operating budgets.

In response to the need for more effective citizen involvement, the department recommended the development of an Area Planning Program.

Under this program, planners are assigned to specific neighborhoods to identify issues, act as liaisons between the Department of City Planning, the community and other city agencies, and perform extensive follow-up action in their areas once detailed improvement plans are ready for implementation. Such close continuous association with a particular neighborhood by one planner, who can call upon the resources of a larger team if necessary, has achieved the desired result of focusing on some communities which have heretofore been largely excluded from the benefits of the public planning process. Through involvement in extended preliminary planning, residents have an opportunity to voice their opinions and to devise, with the assistance of the assigned planner, alternative plans.

These examples encompass a wide variety of citizen involvement strategies: public hearings, advisory councils, publicity campaigns, and town meetings. There are other mechanisms and other issues. In formulating citizen involvement processes, it is hoped that groups will bear in mind that the purpose of citizen involvement is to keep the public informed, and to enhance the relevance and accountability of governments, thereby increasing the probability that public decisions will have widespread acceptability and support. 

*Ms. Pharis is a Policy Analyst in HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development.*

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## notebook

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The HUD Bicentennial program gains momentum with the inception of 1976. HUD Secretary Hills and John W. Warner, Administrator of the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, will announce Horizons on Display, the jointly-sponsored Bicentennial program at a national press conference in late January. They will welcome to Washington 200 representatives of the sites included in the Horizons program, sites that represent the capacity to meet community problems in communities large and small across the United States. The sites represent responses in areas as diverse as health and housing, leisure and communications, historic preservation and citizen involvement. Each site represents, in a sense, a community gift to the Nation on its birthday. A descriptive catalogue—*Horizons on Display: Part of the Continuing American Revolution*—and an annotated map will be available at the press conference and for distribution throughout the year.

A year-long public education program that will focus on information exchange, and an orientation program for the sites are being handled under contract by Porter, Novelli & Associates, Inc., of Washington, D.C.

The Horizons on Display program will be the official U.S. demonstration project at Habitat, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, May 31-June 11, in Vancouver, Canada. This month the international planning committee for Habitat will hold its final 2 weeks of meetings in New York City; one of the scheduled events is a tour of the Horizons sites in the city.

Mini-computers (smaller, less costly units) are being used in an increasing number of cities and for a variety of data processing functions, reports the International City Management Association. The association writes in its Management Information Series that while most mini-computers are found in cities, some State and county agencies are also using this equipment. They are being installed for use in police, general administration, State university, airports and transportation systems.

A 5-year voluntary Affirmative Marketing Agreement between HUD and the National Association of Realtors (NAR) was unanimously adopted at the association's recent convention in San Francisco. The agreement establishes guidelines for the local boards and civil and human rights organizations to work together in formulating the objectives of fair housing programs in their communities.

A directory of disaster-related studies, investigations and research efforts of the past 5 years has been completed, according to the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration (FDAA). The publication, entitled "Directory of Disaster-Related Technology," lists such projects as disaster preparedness, mitigation and hazard reduction of natural disasters in the United States. FDAA officials said this compendium was prepared to improve application of disaster-related technology by State, Federal, local governments and the private sector through the exchange of information on recently completed and current research and studies. Agency officials said the directory would have application in such areas as legislation, land-use planning and regulations, building standards and code formulations, design and construction practices, emergency planning and operations, and other measures of disaster mitigation. Most of the information was gathered from the Department of Commerce's National Technical Information Service and the Smithsonian's Science Information Exchange, according to FDAA. Copies of the directory are available from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20401.

The appointment of Don Morrow as Administrator of HUD's Region V (Chicago) was announced recently by Secretary Carla Hills.

Johnny Bullock, Jr., was recently appointed Director of HUD's St. Louis, Mo., Area Office.

Housing ranked as the number one problem in Fond du Lac, an industrial city of 35,515 people, when citizens posted community needs. Some 156 people assembled once a week for 6 weeks to give city officials their views of the city's needs that could be met using the \$2.5 million allocated to the city through 1977 under the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1974.

HUD Research and demonstration contracts totalling nearly \$100,000 are being awarded to 10 university-local government practitioner groups to develop innovative techniques to strengthen the education of urban managers. Administering these awards for HUD will be the International City Management Association (ICMA) and the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA).



# Homesteading the Urban Frontier

People are not lining up with all their possessions in Conestoga wagons to claim property as in the 1860's. Homesteading has, however, recaptured the imagination and attention of citizens and public officials across the country. The frontier is now the inner city and Urban Homesteading is a catalyst to mobilize human and financial investment in preserving declining neighborhoods. Homesteading has a unique function among preservation strategies—that of bringing a diverse group of people back to the inner city. Homesteading has the potential for attracting citizens with a wide range of incomes, education and personal taste. For some, decent housing is the goal; for others, it is a chance to be closer to work and to the amenities of city life. These people will have a stake in the neighborhood and could be a major force in stabilizing and reclaiming the area. The abandoned housing which produced a flight from the city could now serve as the basis for encouraging a return.

The nationwide enthusiasm for Urban Homesteading is demonstrated by the 61 cities which designed imaginative programs to participate in HUD's Urban Homesteading Demonstration. Because of limited resources only 22 of the program applications were selected to become demonstration sites. For these sites, HUD will supply the equivalent of \$5 million worth of structurally sound homes (approximately 1,000) and \$5 million in Section 312 rehabilitation loans. This \$10 million incentive has resulted in city commitments of \$50 million for neighborhood improvement, homesteader support and rehabilitation financing, and over \$12 million in private financing for the rehabilitation of Homesteading properties.

City experience in Homesteading has shown that neighborhood and homesteader support systems are critical to the success of Homesteading. Homesteading alone cannot reverse neighborhood deterioration. It must be supported by a coordinated approach to neighborhood improvement and the investment of private mortgage capital. Consequently, the 22 participating cities will be operating widely divergent programs tailored to the target neighborhoods they have selected. Concentrated neighborhood services, capital improvements, extensive homesteader training and reduced interest rates on rehabilitation loans are some of the program elements that cities have determined are most valuable in making Home-



steading work. Examples of some innovative Homesteading ideas include:

- Use of a portion of Community Development Block Grant funds to reduce the interest rate on rehabilitation loans to 5 percent (Chicago).

- Operation of a Tool Loan Program to help homesteaders contribute "sweat equity" (Rockford, Ill., Wilmington, Del., Jersey City, N.J., and Milwaukee, Wis.).

- Establishment of an Emergency Hardship Loan Program with part of the Community Development Block Grant funds which will advance funds to homesteaders to make their mortgage payments in the event that they become unemployed or disabled (Oakland).

HUD's purpose in undertaking this demonstration is to test the workability of Homesteading as a preservation tool and to experiment with alternative techniques for rehabilitation financing, homesteader selection, marketing, property disposition, and neighborhood and homesteader support.

Homesteading's potential as a catalyst for inner-city redevelopment stems from its ability to attract the critical agents of change—city managers, businessmen and citizens. While each values Homesteading differently—as an eventual source of city revenue, investment potential or homeownership—Homesteading becomes the focal point for better utilizing the existing housing stock while preserving neighborhoods.

Ultimate responsibility for effectively using Homesteading to stabilize neighborhoods lies with the city. The cities have selected the target areas and will be identifying properties, selecting homesteaders, and fully implementing the program. Cities participating in the demonstration are: Atlanta, Georgia; Baltimore, Maryland; Jersey City, New Jersey; Kansas City, Missouri; Boston, Massachusetts; Chicago, Illinois; Cincinnati, Ohio; Columbus, Ohio; Dallas, Texas; Decatur, Georgia; Gary, Indiana; Indianapolis, Indiana; Islip, Suffolk County, New York; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Minneapolis, Minnesota; New York City, New York; Oakland, California; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Rockford, Illinois; South Bend, Indiana; Tacoma, Washington; and Wilmington, Delaware. ☛

—Barbara Haug, Program Analyst  
HUD Office of Policy Development and Research

# Local Alternatives for Citizen Participation

by Adam W. Herbert

The term "Citizen Participation" refers to a wide range of concepts. Some see it as belonging to civic and political organizations. Others construe it as "keeping-up" with civic affairs, attending city council meetings, or writing to an elected official. Still others see it as voting or even running for public office. All of these acts of involvement might be labeled "political participation." Contemporary advocates of Citizen Participation now define the concept more broadly to focus on the planning and administrative activities of public agencies. They see community involvement as the process by which policy decisions regarding planning, service levels, quality and delivery are shared among professional administrators, citizens and elected officials.

While some public administrators and urban planners find demands for greater citizen involvement difficult to understand, on balance this movement represents a natural progression in the quest for better, more responsive government. From a community perspective:

- It is a response to the elitist attitudes of many public officials who have come to regard most of the citizens they serve as naive, stupid, unsophisticated and uninterested in public affairs.

- It is viewed as a vehicle to correct service disparities between sections of a community.

- It is regarded as a technique which will lead to more responsive public policies and effective public programs. This assumption is based upon the belief that the absence of input from citizens related to service delivery, needs, and quality, partially explains poor quality governmental responses to community needs. Through formalized Citizen Participation procedures, it is expected that civil servants will more clearly understand community priorities, values,

needs, dislikes, etc., thereby serving better the people's needs.

- It is regarded as a right stemming from Federal mandates and requirements established in the 1960's.

## Alternative Forms for Participation

There is no set formula for citizen involvement in governmental planning and administrative processes. A number of key factors have, however, greatly influenced the ultimate forms and/or levels of involvement of citizens in local affairs. Perhaps the most important are the following:

- specific Federal and/or State requirements which require Citizen Participation in public programs (transportation planning, community action programs, Model Cities, etc.)

- the desires of governmental officials for citizen involvement (hidden agendas);

- administrators' and employees' perceptions, fears of, and biases toward citizens;

- financial resources available to the community for use in facilitating participation (What can the city afford?);

- previous experiences of bureaucrats, or their colleagues in other locations with Citizen Participation (What happened when they tried it before?).

The magnitude, presence and/or absence of the factors described above have led to a number of participatory models being developed at the State and local government levels around the country. The most frequently utilized forms of local community involvement are: public hearings; questionnaires; neighborhood planning commission or council meetings; city-wide advisory boards or councils; neighborhood advisory boards or councils; little (branch) city halls; and, community corporations.

Traditionally, the general pattern has been for most communities to

utilize questionnaires and public hearings as the major vehicles to ascertain citizen needs and attitudes regarding service and planning alternatives. Recently, however, both methods have been subjected to major criticisms. These concerns have in turn led to demands for the development of new methods of citizen involvement.

## Essential Steps in Developing a Participation System

In far too many cases, communities develop Citizen Participation systems in a very haphazard fashion. A community or agency that decides to provide avenues for citizen input into its planning and administrative activities should consider doing the following:

- define the purpose/intent for participation;

- determine the best form to achieve the defined purpose;

- determine the powers to be given citizens (their functions);

- define neighborhoods or local community boundaries;

- determine the number of local representative units;

- determine the number of representatives or advisors;

- establish terms of office;

- define method of selecting representatives; (a) elected; (b) appointed

- define method to assure accountability to the neighborhood;

- establish a process for evaluation of: (a) citizens' perceptions of the effects of their involvement; and (b) weaknesses in the system which might be strengthened;

- determine the kinds of technical support and financial resources that will be available to citizen groups, including a decision on sources of funds and ultimate accountability of staff.

*Dr. Herbert is Special Assistant to the HUD Under Secretary.*

# lines&numbers

## Quality of U.S. Housing Inventory in 1973

The results of the first Annual Housing Survey, developed by HUD and the Bureau of the Census, attest to the generally high quality of the Nation's housing. The 1973 survey was the first attempt to expand the information on housing quality beyond the two indicators provided by the 1970 census, the presence of complete plumbing and persons per room (overcrowding). Criteria added by this survey included items on breakdowns in plumbing and heating equipment, structural deficiencies and breakdowns in electrical facilities:

Of the 42 million households in housing units with all plumbing facilities and with one flush toilet, only 3.3 percent reported breakdowns.

Of the 59 million housing units with heating equipment, approximately 8.4 percent experienced breakdowns and 5.6 percent of these households had to close rooms the previous winter due to insufficient heat.

Approximately one-half of the Nation's housing had a basement. Signs of water backage were reported in 26.9 percent of these units. Of the 22.6 million owner-occupied units with a basement, 30.6 percent were reported to have signs of water leakage.

The presence of open cracks or holes in interior ceilings or walls and broken plaster and peeling paint were other structural conditions surveyed. About 6 percent of the households reported open cracks or holes in walls and ceilings while 4.7 percent reported broken plaster or peeling paint.

Electrical deficiencies reported included the lack of room outlets, exposed wiring and fuse or circuit breaker blowouts. Approximately 5.3 percent of all reporting households had rooms lacking working outlets. In 16 percent of all units occupied prior to the surveys, fuse or circuit breaker blowouts were reported, while in 4 percent of all occupied units, some or all of the electrical wiring was exposed.

Approximately 58.3 million of the occupied units in the Nation had 2 bedrooms or more. Of this total, 6.4 million units or 11.0 percent had at least one bedroom that lacked privacy. One-half of all occupied units contained three or more persons. Of these units about 12 percent or 4.0 million reported at least one bedroom used by three or more persons.

## Housing Characteristics — 1973 (Units in Thousands)

<u>With all plumbing</u> 62,091	<u>With one toilet</u> 42,077	<u>No breakdowns</u> 39,944	<u>%</u> 96.7	<u>Breakdowns</u> 1,366	<u>%</u> 3.3
<u>With heating systems</u> 59,301	<u>With breakdowns</u> 4,956	<u>%</u> 8.5	<u>Closed rooms</u> 3,282	<u>%</u> 5.6	<u>Unheated rooms</u> 13,114
<u>All housing with basements</u> 34,829	<u>All housing with water leakage</u> 9,346	<u>%</u> 26.9	<u>Homes with basements</u> 22,631	<u>Homes with water leakage</u> 6,900	<u>%</u> 30.6
<u>All occupied units</u> 69,337	<u>With cracks or holes</u> 4,179	<u>%</u> 6.0	<u>Plaster or Paint problems</u> 3,237	<u>%</u> 4.7	<u>With roof leakage</u> 5,260
<u>All occupied units</u> 69,337	<u>Lack working outlets</u> 3,661	<u>%</u> 5.3	<u>Occupied units surveyed</u> 64,369	<u>Fuse or switch blowouts</u> 9,938	<u>%</u> 16.0
<u>All occupied units</u> 69,337	<u>With 2 or more bedrooms</u> 58,321	<u>%</u> 84.1	<u>One or more lacking privacy</u> 6,391	<u>%</u> 11.0	<u>Bedrooms used by 3 or more persons</u> 3,959

Source: Current Housing Reports, Annual Housing Survey: 1973, Part B, Series H-150-73B. Bureau of Census, U.S. Department of Commerce.

—Prepared by Robert Ryan  
Office of Administration

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